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The Commonweal

February 10, 1950

The Nature of Modern War

James Burnham

Writing the Life of Von Hugel

Michael de la Bedoyere

The Welfare State

A policy Statement

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The Commonweal

COMMONWEAL STATEMENTS

II. The Welfare State

IN THE loose terminology of American political debate, the term "welfare state" has no hard and fast meaning. Like the terms "rugged individualism" or "socialism" or "communism," it is variously employed, depending on one's point of view, to describe a condition either of paradise or hell on earth. We believe, therefore, that it will be helpful to try here to arrive at a less passionate idea of what the term means and then, in a subsequent statement, to examine President Truman's Fair Deal to see in what sense it may be called a welfare state.

As the mentors of the Fair Deal point out, the word "welfare" first turns up in the preamble to the Constitution, where it is explicitly stated that our Constitution is established "to promote the general welfare." Today this is taken to mean that a state can best promote the general welfare by concentrating more and more power at a central point and setting up there the bureaucratic machinery necessary to get things done. The state then considers itself responsible for the material security of every citizen "from the cradle to the grave." In taking on this responsibility, the state extends the power and authority of the federal government, gradually moving toward what is called "statism." This, too, is such a loose term that even President Truman not long ago said that he knew of no good definition for it. We would subscribe in general to this standard definition: "statism is the concentration of all economic controls and economic planning in the hands of a highly centralized government." Obviously, we have not yet gone that far in this country. But we are on the way.

IS THIS centralization a good or a bad thing? There is no pat, doctrinaire answer to that question, but before making any reply to it, one is led first to ask another question: How much should the state do for its citizens? Perhaps the most basic duty of the state toward all citizens is the preservation of order, the maintenance of security against invasion from without and violence from within. The purpose of this protection is to assure the individual that he shall be secure and free to exercise his personal rights and to develop as a person in as unhindered a way as possible. Another duty of the state is to establish such material conditions that its citizens are free from want, that they are adequately fed, housed and clothed. Finally, a third duty of the state is to provide for man's social well-being; since he is not born to live or die alone, the citizen is entitled to a healthy community life and he has, consequently, a right to expect the state to preserve the moral good of the community.

For some time now the tendency has been for the state to fulfil these duties to its citizens by passing protective and welfare legislation of a broad, inclusive kind. This development has been slow in reaching the United States. From its beginnings, when Bismarck pushed the first social legislation through the German Reichstag, welfare statism became popular in Europe and subsequent-

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ly took almost full form in New Zealand, Australia and Britain; in a corrupted form it is also the social pattern in all totalitarian states. As this historical movement indicates, the centralized state, in one form or another, has come along in the wake of the Industrial Revolution to serve as a workable means sometimes to marshal the new material forces industrialism gave us and sometimes to level out the inequalities industrialism left us. With the massing of populations in cities, with the rise of a vast proletariat class dependent on factory employment and having no productive property of its own, while living insecurely at the mercy of business cycle fluctuations in a competitive economy, and with the tighter concentration of wealth and banking functions in the hands of the few, it was found that the whole environment man now lived in had somehow to be controlled and managed by a political institution big enough to deal with this industrial way of life. The state grew strong enough to enslave or to liberate its citizens, depending on the moral conscience it had. In any event, the state took charge, gave man the security he needed and in the bargain he sacrificed to it some, and occasionally nearly all, of his freedoms.

IN THIS country the New Deal took charge in the national emergency of 1932. It legislated a series of welfare measures which continue to expand now under the Fair Deal: social security, federal housing, unemployment relief, minimum wage, price supports and subsidies, anti-trust and securities regulations, rural and river development projects. These measures, which worked so well to put the country back on its feet in 1933, have by and large won the support of the people. Still, Americans remain suspicious of too much government in Washington and so the question remains: How much more should there be?

In answering that question, this magazine has tried to follow two principles. They are as follows: "Whenever the welfare of a community requires a common action, the unity of that common action must be assured by the higher organs of the community." And: "Whenever a task can be satisfactorily achieved by the initiative of the individual or that of small social units, the fulfillment of that task must be left to the initiative of the individual or to that of the small social units." Now these principles hardly provide one with sufficient reason for either wholesale condemnation or unqualified praise of the welfare state and all its works. On the basis of these principles, we have supported it at times, opposed it at others. In every case we have been reluctant to see the individual surrender his initiative to the state, unless it has been clearly necessary for the common good, since we believe that the strength and the vitality of a free society depend directly and ultimately on how free the person is to think, to talk, to make decisions for himself, and to worship as he sees fit. The vitality of a free society does not come from the fiat of a ruling group at the top.

WE DO NOT look on the welfare state as inevitably trampling personal initiative to death, or as an evil in itself. But we do believe that it is potentially a serious threat to a free society, to the liberal tradition of personal independence. If the present welfare state can be seen as still evolving, still developing its techniques, we are hopeful that eventually it will pass through the centralizing stage it is now in and will gradually work toward de-centralization, of which there are already signs in Britain, giving the individual a more personal sense of sharing in the management of his affairs, as, for example, through such techniques as local co-operative enterprises. In the last analysis, every advance of the welfare state must be watched and judged principally on two counts: does it threaten essential personal liberties, and how does it affect the moral vitality of a community of free persons?

In President Truman's Fair Deal, there are measures which we support or oppose in the light of the principles referred to here; in the third Commonweal Statement we shall review our position on the more important issues in the President's program.

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WEEK BY WEEK

Dilemma about Bao Dai

A SWING around the lands of Southeast Asia reveals a desperate situation nearly everywhere. Half the land and one-third of the people of Indo-China have fallen to Ho Chi Minh, whom Russia has just recognized as the legitimate power there and to whom the Chinese Communists can now supply arms. Thailand (Siam), currently fearful of a fifth column among its large Chinese minority, dreads invasion by its ancient Indo-Chinese enemy if Ho Chi Minh should win out. British Malaya would also be gravely threatened by this eventuality. The young, anti-foreign government of Burma is said to be a virtual prisoner behind its own barbed wire stockade in Rangoon, while outside it the tough Karen hill tribesmen (former allies of the British) and local Communists stand in revolt.

This highly populated, unstable area is not only a gateway to India but the life-giving "rice-bowl" of Asia. Millions of people are dependent for their sustenance on the exports of foodstuffs which the area normally provides. If Mao and his local allies should succeed in taking over, they might divert these rice surpluses to China to bolster the new regime and exert the pressure of near-starvation on other peoples hitherto not eager to go Communist themselves.

With Indo-China now the strategic key to this troubled area, the big question is whether or not to support Bao Dai, whom the French have installed with a certain degree of autonomy. Some observers give him a 50-50 chance. He has won some native followers. His men have fought well and regained some territory from Ho Chi Minh; a number of peasants have welcomed such "liberation" since Bao Dai's forces do not live off the land to the extent that Ho's men do.

After heated debate the French Assembly has voted a series of new agreements with Bao Dai, who unexpectedly has manifested a certain degree of independence. Great Britain is soon expected to grant him recognition. Recent remarks of Mr. Jessup, now on the scene, indicate that the United States is planning to do likewise. Yet Mr. Nehru and other Asiatics forestalled recognition by the British Commonwealth conference at Ceylon on the grounds that Bao Dai had not sufficiently indicated either that he was a free agent rather than a puppet of the French, or that his government was in effective control.

That is the vulnerable spot. The peoples of French Indo-China have strong aspirations for national self-determination and are anti-French. Yet, if the French were to withdraw their troops at this moment, Bao Dai would fall and Communist Ho would take over.

An agreement on the Indonesian pattern is the only feasible long-term solution. France would have to relinquish her hold on this colony definitively, even though Indo-China is so important to her present economy. A special UN committee would act as mediator between national leaders (perhaps including Bao Dai) and French authorities in order to set up a series of stages for transferring sovereignty and withdrawing troops. This provisional period would be used to equip and train a national army. On the dates agreed upon the peoples of Indo-China would set up their own government.

All in all, preferable as this plan is to that of throwing all support to Bao Dai in his present political set-up, this seems like a long shot. It would come off only in the event of full-fledged support by a UN majority, France, the United States, Great Britain and the Commonwealth. It would have to be supplemented by economic measures. And simultaneously the other hard-pressed nations of Southeast Asia would need to receive political and military help and economic assistance. When so heavily populated and highly productive an area is in jeopardy — and so much depends on the outcome—only the most strenuous and concerted measures will serve. Vigorous support of Bao Dai as an immediate stop-gap must be only a prelude to facilitating full self-realization for these colonial peoples.

FEPC

THERE is a substantial case that can be made against a federal Fair Employment Practices Commission on the same principle that underlies the proposal of such a Commission: complete elimination of all barriers and discriminations between races. If an FEPC were to be established by the federal government, and its decisions were firmly enforced in the South, (a considerable problem where almost always the majority of white citizens—the influential citizens—would be in opposition) it would indeed be adrenalin in the veins of the demagogy that is currently registering a slowing pulse.

It seems quite certain that the immediate reaction would be a weakening of the political power of the Southern progressive movement, which would be identified with the hated FEPC by the reactionary and racist elements. It can be argued then, that actually the fastest way to bring interracial justice is to encourage the development of those who are called the Southern progressives

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• NEXT WEEK •

"Should Germany Be Rearmed? That this question is asked today shows how dangerous it is to use the word 'never' in politics. For in 1945-1946 it seemed that the German armed forces had disappeared forever, that the German army and navy would never rise again, after the collapse of Hitler's Third Reich."

Waldemar Gurian, in THE REARMAMENT OF GERMANY, weighs the pros and cons of a dangerous question.

(that is to say, those whose education and moral consciousness has made them attack a social problem greater than exists anywhere else in this country) while avoiding any federal legislation that would provide the demagogues with gasoline to throw on the fire. The best slogan for this argument is that you can't legislate morality.

The difficulty with this argument is that the majority of Southerners—and their representatives—would not grant the principle: Negroes should have full equality. They may admit economic and political equality, and fight for it courageously, but they draw the line with conviction at the point of social equality. Thus, their approach is to the Christian quite inadequate.

Those who support the Civil Rights program claim that you *can* legislate morality. That legislation is not only able to compel people to act morally by its constant legal pressure, but that it has a strong educational power. They may add that the Negroes, the Jews, the Asiatics and Catholics in the rest of the nation—who want an FEPC to protect their right to be hired on the basis of their ability, and not to be pre-excluded because of their name, or color or religion—must not be deprived of that protection because of the racial tradition and political power of the South. The supporters of the program believe that it would accomplish enough in the long run even in the South to overbalance the immediate disadvantages. The decision that their gamble is justified is not to be taken facilely.

But when you go to the essence of the question, when you get beyond the demagogic motives that are held by Northern as well as Southern politicians, when you get beyond the cold-blooded trading of civil rights for oleo, when you get to the *reason* for the legislation, you face a simple question: Are the rights of the Negroes and other minorities who are our neighbors today to be guaranteed? And as Americans, and Christians, there is obviously a single reply—and the urgency of that question and its answer solve for us the problem: gradualism vs. legislation. We advocate a federal FEPC, and we believe and pray that the power of the legislation will bring the time closer when the brotherhood Christians and Americans profess will be *given,* not compelled.

Remember Pearl Harbor

BEFORE *that* Sunday there was the stereotyped picture Americans had of Japanese—clean, clever little fellows with progressive ways and a strange Oriental genius for imitation. Overnight the picture changed. The "clean little Japs" became "dirty little yellow bellies." Their cleverness, turned against us, became shameful cunning. The mystery we had once found charming, fragrant with cherry blossoms, became frightfully sinister and inhuman. And that is the way it was

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all through the war. The Japanese was a weird, hardly human creature, mysteriously set off from the general run of men. There were half-serious talks about the difference between a Jap and an ape, and a popular magazine featured the picture of a sweet-faced American girl whose boy friend in the Pacific sent her the skull of a dead Jap (the only good kind) as a souvenir. She was posed studying it with a certain fond interest as a few years earlier, or later, she might have studied a valentine.

But after the victory, bit by bit, slowly the Japanese became people again. If we watched our picture magazines and movies carefully, we discovered for one thing that they didn't all have grotesquely large teeth. When the Occupation soldiers wrote home to tell about having dinner in Japanese homes it was something of a shock at first. But later when the word got around about genuine love affairs, some marriages, numerous temporary liaisons, and when a whole generation of slant-eyed little half-Americans got their pictures taken — well, then the wartime myths were just about dead. The Japanese were back in the human race. Hollywood used handsome Sessue Hayakawa in a Humphrey Bogart picture, and the photographers began to concentrate on Tokyo jitterbuggers, baseball players and the easy-to-look-at Oriental chanteuse.

Most of us had almost forgotten the wartime Jap of the posters and the bloody movies, so dead was the old propaganda. Then last week 13 members of the present Japanese Diet, sent to the U. S. with the blessing of General MacArthur "to study democracy in action," reached Boston. There they were barred, by a vote of 11-to-8, from observing the City Council at work. Boston Councilor James Coffey acted as spokesman for the opposing group. Mr. Coffey apparently hasn't forgotten, like most of us, the Jap that our wartime legend and propaganda brought into being on December 7, 1941 and kept alive for four years. The 13 Diet members MacArthur approved of were to him just Japs. And a Jap, of course, is a Jap, as all good Americans used to say. Coffey wasn't thinking of 13 different men when he spoke. He was thinking of that frightful wartime creature. "The last time they were here," he said, "they bombed Pearl Harbor. Why educate them to come over here to do it again? . . . Feed them but don't educate them." It was the sort of thing anybody on the street might have said five or six years ago. But now it was so unusual that it made headlines. Most of us were surprised.

For most of us, reason, realism and common sense were some of the peacetime luxuries we were enjoying along with our apple pie and right to boo the Brooklyn Dodgers. Mr. Coffey, it seems, took his wartime propaganda a bit too seriously. No matter what General MacArthur says, for him a Jap is still a Jap.

On the Road to Ruin

IN BERLIN, as in almost any city you can name, there are "competent observers" and "usually well-informed sources" who devote their time, free of charge, to probing the mysteries of the Kremlin. The Berliners have the jump on their fellow seers by being closer to the great walls and it is from them we learn that in the current on-again, off-again little blockade of the highway to Berlin, the Russian game is to aggravate the unemployment situation in the western sectors of Berlin as an object lesson to East Berliners, who, some nine months hence, will be going to the polls in one of Russia's "democratic" elections. The Kremlin, remembering the anti-Soviet demonstration in Berlin in September, 1948, is said to be engaged now in a long-range campaign to educate the East Berliners to the facts of life before the election.

From a distance this seems to us a perfectly sound construction of events, to which we would add only a small contribution to the effect that the Russians, in twisting the long Western supply arm to Berlin whenever they feel like it, send spasms of embarrassment and frustration all over Western faces, making us, in the eyes of the world, helpless at the hands of every Russian corporal who wants to dally and rummage around our trucks. This fits nicely into the campaign to make the West look cheap, to destroy her reputation; in China it has been arranged that we "lose face," and in the Balkans, our diplomats are constantly accused of being spies, sabotaging the "people's democracies." The total effect is a telling one; it degrades the opponent and drags him down to your own sub-rational standard of human relations.

It has been said many times that the language used by the Russians in the UN would have caused wars by nineteenth century standards of diplomacy. Vishinsky's rage and Molotov's and Gromyko's walks must go down in history, with Hitler's rug-chewing, as signs of the times, as signs of the interior, irrational violence brought against the very nature of man. But man remains, despite all these displays, a rational creature who cannot forever hate or be bullied or be thrown around, who must make contact with his fellow men on rational grounds, in consonance with his nature, and not through pettiness, abuse, rage and purges. As a system of human relationships, wherever these relations occur, in Berlin, the UN, in satellite purges, in Siberian labor camps, Soviet Communism shows itself to be inhuman, at war every day with the nature of man, and consequently, at war with itself, working its own final destruction.

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The Nature of Modern War

The traditional distinctions between civilian and military, between peace and war, have broken down. The cold war is a very real war.

James Burnham

IN *The Struggle for the World* I wrote that the Third World War had begun in April, 1944, the date of the communist-led mutiny in the Greek naval forces stationed at Alexandria. Even those reviewers who otherwise favored that book were inclined to object to the "extremism" of this statement, or to explain it as exaggerated rhetoric, a metaphor or figure of speech. I want to make clear that, in intention at least, the statement was the most literal of prose.

The exact date selected was perhaps somewhat arbitrary. However, facts which only recently have become plain do seem to mark the spring of 1944 as a turning point. By then the communist leadership felt certain that Hitler was going to be defeated, and therefore Hitler was no longer the sole or even the main enemy and problem. From the viewpoint of communist strategy, it was then necessary, with the Hitler onslaught in the process of liquidation, to go on to the next step in the struggle for world communist domination: the contest with the United States and its potential non-communist allies. We find, accordingly, that the communist strategy throughout the Balkans was altered during the spring and summer of 1944. The communist-led partisans virtually ceased their operations against the Nazis, and concentrated their efforts against the rival, non-communist resistance movements (Zervas in Greece, Mihailovitch in Yugoslavia, the Zogists and republicans in Albania). The Western High Command, not understanding the nature of the war and not believing that the resistance was an important military phenomenon in any case, not only permitted but aided the communists in their liquidation of their opponents. At the same time, the communists dropped their 100-per-cent anti-German attitude, and began to woo "good Germans" through propaganda and the operations of the Free Germany movement. The communist forces in China had all along been staying out of fights with the Japanese, in order to prepare for the time when they would move toward the conquest of all China.

The exact date is not important. For that matter, it is only in the case of wars of the traditional type, the beginnings of which are formalized by declarations, that we can assign exact and unambiguous dates.

In spite of the objections made to my statement that the Third World War had begun, the phrase "cold war" was coined and became rapidly accepted within a few months of the time of publication of *The Struggle for the World* (March, 1947). If this phrase is taken seriously, not as slick journalism, it sufficiently makes the point. It is not, as a rule, taken seriously.

During the Big Four Foreign Ministers' Conference in the spring of 1949, I received a letter from a man who, though not publicly known, was a founder and formerly a leading member of the Communist Party of the United States. He wrote, in part, as follows:

> It is high time that the question of political warfare (cold war) be understood in its proper stature in the total complex. This type of warfare made Stalin's conquest of China possible at an expense which I would estimate as not more than half a billion dollars to the Kremlin over a period of twenty-three years.
>
> This type of war is cumulative: that is, whereas twenty-three years ago, the resources of the Kremlin were small as compared to now, and whereas there were then massive counter-forces like Germany, France, Japan, Italy, etc., they all have been laid low and Britain weakened, while the Kremlin's weight in the total picture has immensely grown. . . . Political war as carried on a generation or so ago (Marxism-Leninism) has grown up from a more or less serious annoyance to Stalinism, a potent arm of conquest of the Soviet Empire.
>
> The trouble with us is that although we talk about cold war, we have not yet recognized juridically and otherwise this type of warfare *as war itself,* and we deal with it as the Kremlin wishes us to do, as a nuisance, the parentage of which is taken cognizance of under the table, but not recognized as actual warfare on the part of the Kremlin proper. . . .
>
> Stalin's Empire, which is carrying on a total war (by the new method) against us and our allies all over the world, now will meet us on the diplomatic table again, not to call off the war as a whole, but

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JAMES BURNHAM *is the author of* The Managerial Revolution *and* The Struggle for the World. *This article is part of a forthcoming volume,* The Coming Defeat of Communism (*John Day.* $3.50). *Copyright* 1950 *by James Burnham.*

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> to make, with our help, a partial retreat on only one part of the far-flung front, namely, Germany: retreat in order to better advance, as Lenin said. . . .
>
> If we continue to meet Stalin on his terms of temporary, one-by-one bargains, we will remain on the defensive and he will retain the initiative. . . .

These are not the abstractions of a theorist, but lessons learned from direct and participating experience.

★

THE phrase "cold war," however, even if taken seriously, contains a deceptive adjective. By describing a war as "cold," it is presumably meant that, though conflicts occur, blood does not flow and shots are not fired. But if so, then the present war, the war that is now going on, is by no means "cold." Much blood is flowing, and many shots are being fired. The war has been at least warm in Greece and in China, in Costa Rica during 1947, in the East Indies and Malaya and Indo-China, in the Philippines during the struggle against the communist-led Hukbalahaps. In the Baltic states or throughout Eastern Europe, it has not seemed cold to the hundreds of thousands who have been shot or sent to the slave camps of Siberia, nor has it been cold for the Ukrainian Insurgent Army which from its woods still holds out against the troops of the MVD and the Red Army detachments.

It is of course true that the present stage of the war is not identical with the stage of the war against the Nazis which was reached from 1942 to 1944. The principal organized mass armies of the chief direct contestants are not now committed to overt action. (Though it should be remarked that elements of these armies, under the names of "occupation forces," "observers," "liaison officers," "trainers," and the like, are committed.) The war is not yet all out. It may be added that it is desirable that it should not become so.

Even in traditional war, as traditionally understood, all forces and weapons are not employed at all times. In fact, all are very seldom employed. Was it war in the early months of 1940? Less killing and shooting were going on than much of the time since 1945. Mass armies were not committed in Western Europe during 1941 and 1942; but it is generally agreed that a war was then, and there, going on. At no time during the Second World War was every possible weapon thrown into the contest. Poison gas and biological weapons were never used, though they were available. On some fronts (in the Pacific, for example) tanks and heavy artillery did not appear. Often, most of the time, the bulk of the mass armies was not directly fighting.

In any war, an intelligent commander, out of the forces and weapons available to him, uses those that are appropriate to the given stage of the war and the given concrete situation. He does not send heavy tanks into an impenetrable jungle, or 16-inch howitzers into guerrilla warfare in desolate mountains.

It is ambiguous even to call the present war "limited." True enough, the means now being used are selected and limited, though we have just noted that this is the case in all wars at all times. The ratio of more or less novel means—political, ideological, and subversive—to fighting is higher at present than in a conventional war. It would, for this reason, perhaps be convenient to call the present stage of the war "psychological-subversive," so long as we did not consider this to mean that this stage is exclusively so. Nevertheless, from another point of view, from the point of view of the objective of the enemy, the present war is unlimited. His objective, openly proclaimed and never varied, is a communist monopoly of power in the entire world: what he calls the "World Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics." As defined by objective, it is hard to imagine how a war could be less "limited."

The battles and campaigns of this war, far from being minor local episodes, are gigantic in scale. Let us suppose that the American public, and its newspapers and radio announcers, recognized the truth: that we are at war. Let us imagine, then, how, in headlines, bulletins, dispatches, and editorials, some of the events since 1945 would have been presented. In 1943, a single bombing raid on a single city could be the major news of the day. What, then, would we make of the conquest of China? The 1948 consolidation of the enemy position in Czechoslovakia ought surely to equal the recapture of Rostov. Tito's break meant a collapse of a whole section of the enemy front. It is the allies and potential allies of the West who are chiefly purged and deported in the Baltic states and the Balkans. Their numbers are very large—a single new wave of deportations from the Baltics in March and April, 1949, is estimated to have taken 170,000. Under our uncomprehending public view, there is often not a single line in the newspapers, not a sentence on the radio. Suppose the 170,000 were counted, as they should be counted, as divisions of allied troops destroyed?

★

I HAVE tried to indicate, by a brief historical review, that the change in the nature of war, the breakdown of the distinctions between civilian and military, between peace and war, are in part the resultant of a long social development with complex technological, economic, political, and moral factors. However, the objective social de-

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velopment has not been by itself sufficient to bring about the result. In spite of that development, it is still conceivable and possible that there should be peace—genuine peace, genuinely distinguishable from war.

This would be conceivable if there were among men a deep enough moral sentiment to block the exploitation of the material and structural complexities of modern society for the purpose of waging perpetual war: but, though conceivable, that is perhaps not possible. Peace would be both conceivable and possible, if there were in the world a social power able and willing to enforce peace. This, in our interrelated world, would mean a world empire or world government, and such must be, and is, the political goal of those of us who wish peace.

However, though it takes at least two to make peace a fact, one is enough to make war. If my opponent has decided that he is at war with me, then there is war; it will not cease to be because I do not wish it, or do not recognize it. What has made peace impossible for this historical period (which, fortunately, need not be long, but which may be) is not merely the involved course of historical development, but the deliberate plan of the totalitarian movements of our time.

It should by now be clear that the Second World War did not begin in August, 1939, but some years before that, in the Rhine and Ethiopia and Spain and Austria and Manchuria and Czechoslovakia. Moreover, it should also be clear, and is clear to many commentators, that if this had been understood in those earlier years, then the stage of the Second World War which started in August, 1939, or perhaps more definitely in the spring of 1940, and which devastated so much of the earth, might have been altogether avoided. The Nazis and the fascists knew that they were at war. They won all of their preliminary campaigns with little effort, because their opponents did not have the same knowledge, and did not attempt to strike back. The Nazis were thus able to consolidate a position from which they could shake the world. In the days of the early and disregarded battles, they could have been stopped without bloodshed, or with very little.

The present enemy, the world communist movement, has gone far beyond the Nazis, in the logical extension of extreme ideas as in territory and power. We give him, as we gave the Nazis, an extravagant advantage by not seeing the truth. He is at war with us, and therefore war exists; but we do not consider ourselves at war, nor will we recognize that there is a war. I should like here to cite one or two examples of how he manipulates his advantage.

In the United States, as everywhere, the members of the communist movement function as agents of the Soviet power. They, and their masters, regard themselves as at war with the United States. They work toward the overthrow of the present government of the United States and its replacement by a communist dictatorship. Some of their activities have become so notorious and so dangerous that there are going on now certain legal actions against the communists: some who are not citizens are being deported, and others are being tried on various charges. But these legal actions and the public attitudes toward them show a maximum of confusion and incoherence.

★

MANY patriotic United States citizens, especially those who feel themselves to be liberal (and, whatever the labels, this means a great many, perhaps a majority), are disturbed at the actions taken against the communists. They believe and say that these actions violate the right of the communists to free speech, free assembly, free petition, etc. The communists themselves, and their own and their fellow-traveling press, feed this liberal disturbance by abundant appeals to free speech and the Bill of Rights.

The fact, however, is that the problem of internal communists has nothing to do with free speech or the Bill of Rights, as the communists perfectly well know — they could hardly help knowing so, since their own program is to abolish all these freedoms as soon as they take power. The confusion is due to our thinking about the communists in terms of peace, and their thinking and acting in terms of war. If the liberal public once recognized the truth, that the communists are at war with us and in the war are agents of the enemy, then its disturbance would cease at once. That firm protective steps should be taken against enemy agents is taken for granted by everyone.

Let us consider another example of a very different kind. Since the communists know themselves to be at war, they are prepared to use, and have used, every expedient means to accomplish the conquest of China. But we, regarding ourselves as at peace, are not prepared to use, and have not used, expedient means which are available to us and possible, to block that conquest. More remarkable still, there are even some among us who are glad that the communists are taking over China—some even who are not themselves communists or fellow-travelers but merely politically blind. Or, analogously, we are not prepared to intervene in, say, Bulgaria, even though we have full legal justification under the peace treaty, and even though firm intervention could be expected to bring important results with little risk.

In diplomatic conferences we are prepared to

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make, and do make, genuine concessions for the sake of peace. The communists seldom make any concession; and when they do, it is in the sense of a tactical retreat in favor of a larger strategy of war. Thus they are inevitably the net victors in every conference.

In the United Nations or the press, communist spokesmen freely and frequently denounce, truly or falsely, anything about us that they choose to mention: our treatment of Negroes or Jews or strikes or Puerto Ricans, our warmongering or oil imperialism or housing or movies. We temper and restrict our criticisms, seldom even referring to the most important matters, because we wish to "reduce tension" and "avoid provocation."

The list might be indefinitely multiplied. In each case, in these chess matches with unlimited stakes, we grant the communist all his men, while we try to play against him with pawns alone.

This last metaphor is no doubt too extreme. We have placed on the board a few additional pieces—a knight and a bishop, let us say, with our atomic queen threatening from the edge of the table. In this century, all nations, whatever their theories, have had to take practically into account the changed nature of modern war. Everyone knows that wars are no longer a matter merely of armies fighting each other on battlefields. The crustiest soldier understands that the military machine is linked indissolubly to the economy as a whole, to technology and science. The hoariest sea dog will grant the need of psychological warfare, even if it doesn't much interest him. Most staff officers will admit, I think, that wars don't end and begin as neatly as they used to, and that what goes on in peace will have a considerable effect on what happens in war.

All this may be general knowledge, and may be acted upon in practice. Nevertheless, only the communists, so far, have recognized clearly that Clausewitz' principle has become outworn, that the line of demarcation between peace and war has vanished; and only the communists are acting upon that recognition. Only the communist doctrine and practice accepts fully the contemporary reality.

Writing the Life of Von Hugel

A biographer's notes on a remarkable yet neglected modern spiritual writer.

Michael de la Bedoyere

TWENTY-FIVE years ago Baron Friedrich von Hügel died in his home at Vicarage Gate, London, at the age of 72.

The notices and memoirs in the religious and more serious journals acclaimed his life and work as something quite outstanding in the religious story of the times, and writer after writer bracketed the "Baron," as he was so often called, with Newman, or at least as standing second only to Newman among Catholic figures in England. Thus the *Times Literary Supplement* wrote: "Were we asked to name the Roman Catholic thinkers who have in modern times left on enduring mark on the religious mind of England, we should mention Newman and we should mention Friedrich von Hügel, but no third without doubts and reservations." The *Tablet* echoed this judgment by attributing to Von Hügel's writings "an influence, greater perhaps than any that has been wielded by Catholics in this country since Newman."

Yet so outstanding a Catholic figure died almost unknown to the great majority of his fellow-Catholics, and today, twenty-five years later, his name is hardly remembered outside specialist circles.

One reason for this is that he suffered the fate of many of those people whose preeminent appeal lay in their *living* personalities. No one who knew Von Hügel or even met or heard him was likely to forget him; but the number was limited and such memories are not easily communicated widely unless there is a Boswell to hand. Nor did he help his own posthumous fame by his writings. He was, as he said himself, a "writers' writer," not a writer who sought any wide appeal.

★

HIS first book was published when he was 56 years old, and the review in the *Times* very rightly observed that this was "no jaunty enterprise, but a solid metaphysical life-work" which involved the reader in "wire entanglements

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of psychological terminology" and "phalanxes of serried syntax." and apart from the two weighty volumes of *The Mystical Element of Religion As Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends,* he never really wrote another book. *Eternal Life* was the expansion of an encyclopedia article, and it bears the mark, despite wonderful passages, of its pedagogical origin. All the other books bearing his name are collections of essays, addresses, lectures and, above all, letters. Most of these are not easy to read, mainly because his most remarkable quality lay in his power to bring to bear on any and every spiritual point the weight of an immensely wide and remarkably deep understanding of religion —the point in question always *felt* with a strength and urgency for which ordinary language and syntax were inadequate vehicles.

Yet I think that the difficulty of his language has been exaggerated. The toughness of his writing comes only because of his patient determination to tackle every detail of a difficulty. Hence the enormous impressiveness of his whole life's work. Perhaps he stands actually *alone* in the whole army of spiritual writers for his persistent refusal to leave a difficulty unfaced. Perhaps he stands *alone* in what he himself distinguished as "subjective truthfulness" from "objective truth." "The soul," he wrote, "finds that its sheet-anchor is its interior (i.e., formally willed) truthfulness —its humble, faithful, loving seeking of material, objective truth, by an ever-increasing attempt to become and be all it knows. And it would rather keep on thus, seeking truth sincerely and with self-humiliation, and thus unconsciously itself grow more like the truth it seeks and which is already inwardly impelling such a soul; than to hold truth in such a static and self-complacent manner, as to arrest its own further approximation and apprehension of that truth."

There is much to meditate on in those words: they are timely for our own day when religious profession without absolute inner sincerity and frankness disgusts; they are a welcome sound to those who look, in spiritual direction and advice, not for stale clichés and wordy maxims divorced from our real beings, but for an honest helping hand, one real step on solid ground further along the way of God. And the truth is that if anyone of reasonable intelligence does pick up a volume of his letters or some at least of the essays, they will very soon come to appreciate his uncanny power of impressing the reader with what really counts, what is really solid in the life of religion.

But just because Von Hügel's spiritual force is so closely connected with his personality and life story we shall probably have to await some interpreter of spiritual genius who will be able to re-create for posterity the living man and his decisive contribution to religious thought. In all probability this task will not be fulfilled for another generation or two when Catholicity, having perhaps lived through, withstood, and absorbed tempestuous times will find it easier to see in a true perspective the troubled years which have immediately preceded the present slow Catholic renaissance. Meanwhile, the time has perhaps already come when a first biographical assessment may be made if only to ease the task of someone tomorrow who can place Von Hügel among, at least, the unofficial doctors of Christianity.

This task was entrusted some years ago to the present writer, but the war, other work and, above all, a sense of insufficient maturity have caused it to be deferred. However, one now hopes to be able to offer something in time for the centenary of Von Hügel's birth in 1952.

Within the pages of some forty volumes of the man's diaries and in large numbers of unpublished, as well as the published letters or extracts of letters there is to be found the inner story of a fascinating and often genuinely tragic drama in which a passionate and vehement Catholic spirit wrestled, often literally on his knees, before God, with Catholics and non-Catholics for the honest truth as he lived and saw it. And that first struggle is seen dovetailed into a yet tougher one—a struggle with himself when, as he wrote: "my allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church cost me more than ten years of intense struggle and wrestling, precisely because, though I needed a large measure of freedom to carry out the task I had proposed to myself, I was beset by temptations to discard all the obligations of authority and seek complete freedom in individual effort; but that, finally, my fidelity to the Church saved me from scepticism and spiritual arrogance, being, when rightly understood and practiced, completely reconcilable with the healthy freedom necessary to my studies."

★

THE first ten years of the present century witnessed the convulsions of Modernism, a chapter in the long and never, to fallen man, finally resolvable tale of tensions between faith and reason, and in those "terrible years," as Von Hügel called them, the Baron played a very prominent part, a part by no means always objectively defensible, yet a part with an astonishingly edifying aspect, both because of his own never weakened personal religious observance and his deep, deep loyalty in spite of everything to the Faith, a loyalty thrown into acute conflict with his loyalty to friends and, as he thought, to himself as scholar and man of integrity.

God alone is final judge, and in the wonderful way in which Von Hügel—and Von Hügel prac-

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tically alone—found his way with renewed strength and spirituality out of the quicksands and morasses of the Modernist years to become the beloved spiritual guide in the deepest things of the spirit to so many Catholics and non-Catholics in the last years of his life, we can surely discern a Divine blessing for his fidelity to Catholic spiritual life and observance, a blessing which provides an assurance that whatever the puzzles and perplexities for human observers, yet all was well with a faithful servant. And this, maybe, was echoed on earth by the assurance of Cardinal Bourne that he had never troubled the Baron and never would.

★

THERE is the picture of the bearded, mantled Baron arguing for two hours on some point of Scriptural criticism at the top of his voice in the windy portico of the British Museum; there is the picture of the broken-hearted father standing by the bedside of his dying daughter—the daughter whom his too strong spiritual food had for a period lead astray only to return and render her soul to God in a full and brave Catholic faith; there is the picture of the utterly loyal friend, deeply influenced by, deeply sympathetic with Loisy and Tyrrell, and never able to convince himself that these souls which he measured always by the standards of his own had crossed or were perilously near crossing the line which he knew divided all that was rich and fruitful from all that was decayed and dead; there is the picture of the leader to whom the best of the "reformers" looked, exhorting his friends to high ideals before they parted at dawn on a Tyrolese mountain; there is the picture of the Baron absorbed and motionless in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament; and there is the picture, perhaps the best of all, of the old, worn and weather-beaten prophet, with a schoolgirl or a schoolboy, telling of the things of God, of the things that were worthwhile in the life God has given us, while the child sat fascinated by the piercing, yet soft, eyes, the strange booming accent, the absurd stories, above all, the heart of the scholar who could find such words for the teaching of the young.

To have known, even at second-hand, Baron Friedrich von Hügel, to have lived long hours with the hundreds of pages on which his angular penciled script lies, to have read the intimate, God-fearing, God-loving letters which the young husband wrote to his young convert bride—to have done these things is to have lived. The problem is to convey to others, without prejudice, without favor, without fear, the story (which could easily be extended to many volumes), of a life so intense, so spiritual, so edifying, so human, and yet so unusual, so perplexing, so studded with pitfalls, so easy to misunderstand.

New Universal Language?

Lily Doblhoff

WHEN Mathias Ràkosi, the top Communist of Hungary, returned from Moscow soon after the war, he instantly sized up the strongly nationalist mood of the Hungarian people, after their subjection to foreign rule under the German occupation. He delivered a highly appreciated speech in which he said: "Hungary must become truly Hungarian; she must be governed by a truly Hungarian Government; we must build up a Hungarian Fatherland for the Hungarian People."

Now, not even 5 years after this speech, the *Szabad Nép* (Free People), official organ of the Communist Party in Hungary, says: "Our Youth shall consider the language of the Komsomols as their second mother-tongue"—and the Hungarian papers fully agree with the statement of the well-known Soviet journalist, D. Zaslavski, who writes: "Through history we see that languages have succeeded each other. Latin was the language of antique times and the beginning of the Middle Ages; French was the language of the ruling classes of feudal times; English has become the language of world capitalism. Looking ahead, we see that Russian will become more and more the universal language of Socialism."

Be that as it may, Russian has become a compulsory subject in Hungarian schools and official reports announce that while only 9,000 students studied the language last year, this year the figure has risen to 200,000.

The program for one day recently on the Budapest radio was as follows:

1. Music for good neighbors. (Russian records.)
2. Stoianov: What we saw in the Soviet Union.
3. The spoken paper of the village.
4. Sunday afternoon at the DFOSZ (Communist Students' Association.)
5. Fifteen minutes of Marxism-Leninism.
6. Choirs: Russian language course.
7. A play: "Tamara Vostrikova and her Brigade."
8. Piano recital of Russian composers.
9. Radio play by Karbovskaia: "The Unmasked Kulak."
10. Singing towns: from St. Petersburg to Leningrad.
11. The road of the Communist Movement.
12. The struggle of Lenin Youth.
13. Excerpts from the works of Katschukoriana.

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Furthermore, we learn that the program of the Hungarian National Theatre concludes with the works of seven new authors who have been taken into this season's program. These authors are: Katajev, Tschjapev, Suchovickaja, Ljadov, Lorsakov, Arkadij and Prevencev.

The papers also report with great pride the fact that this year's best sellers are the two first volumes of Stalin's works; the first volume has been issued in an edition of 50,000, (which is a very great number for such a small country as Hungary), and as these volumes had been sold within a few days, another 25,000 copies had to appear on the market for Stalin's birthday. Another book having a wide sale is *Documents of the Second World War* published by the Révai publishing house; a book that, according to the commentary in *Kis Ujsàg* proves clearly "the unforgivable sin of the American and British Governments and ruling classes in helping Hitler to seize power, and to make use of him as a weapon against the Soviet Union; just as the Western Powers had left Austria to her fate at the moment of the "Anschluss," so did they with Poland when Hitler attacked her in the summer of 1939. The same thing happened in the case of Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union for her part followed from the beginning the same policy of peace."

★

WE HAVE also read with interest the statement of Mr. George Bernàth, Secretary General of the Soviet-Hungarian Society. This Society will be developed to strengthen Soviet-Hungarian friendship. New centers will be formed in the provincial towns; Soviet artists and experts will be invited in ever increasing numbers and throughout the whole country Soviet exhibitions will be organized. The sales of the organ of the Society, the *Uj Vilàg* (New World) have risen from about 25,000 copies at the beginning, to 200,000 at present.

The Hungarian press publishes very little other than Soviet news, or news concerning the relations between Hungary and the Soviet Union, or between Hungary and the other satellite countries. In one copy of the *Szabad Nép,* we find only *three* news items concerning topics other than those mentioned. One wonders whether readers still know that other countries besides the Soviet Union still exist.

By a new decree, all foreign-sounding names of cafés have been abolished, and this applies to hotels, bars or even trade marks which may be reminiscent of the "rottenness of Western capitalism." So the words "Metropol," "Royal," "Savoy," "Abbazia," "Palm Beach," "Smart," "Chez Elle," "Amazone," had to disappear. Budapest's broadest Avenue, Andràssy Street, which leads to the famous Place of the Heroes, where all processions ended, where mass-meetings took place and where, at the Eucharistic Congress held in Budapest, Pius XII, as Apostolic Delegate, celebrated High Mass in the open, will from now on be called Stalin Street.

All this happens in a country neither Slav nor Orthodox.

The Stage

The Man

IT WILL be the performances which are of chief interest in Mel Dinelli's melodrama, produced by Kermit Bloomgarden. Mr. Dinelli has merely conjured a second version of "Kind Lady", its only new twist being a rather more ruthless conclusion. In case you've forgotten it, the fable runs something like this: a charitable woman, living alone is an isolated section of a small American town, takes pity on a homeless youth and, in this case, hires him for a day of housework. One might remark that while it takes us only a few minutes to realize that this Boy is dangerously insane, it somehow takes the kind lady far longer to reach the same conclusion, when it is, of course, too late. I must admit to being rather more interested in what one might call the few "conscious" moments in the piece—when the Boy is struggling on the sheer borderline between his two states of mind—than I was in the more outright horrors. However, it will be as well to add that my companion of the evening was continuously and articulately scared stiff, a condition which a good many sensible people consider the height of entertainment.

Dorothy Gish is handling the misguided heroine with a good deal of art. She is particularly impressive and moving in the downfall moments. And Peggy Ann Garner in the role of an impertinent ingenue is brashly astute. But it is Don Hanmer's playing of the Boy which overshadows everything else. Mr. Hanmer is simply relentlessly good, so much so, that when he appears at the curtain call wearing a perfectly natural *sane* smile, you cannot believe it. So far, I judge he is the acting find of the season. (*at the Fulton*)

The Enchanted

IT IS THE quality of *gaiety* which is paramount, I think, in the work of the late Jean Giraudoux. But since even this word has apparently passed out of the American language—if indeed it ever had a place there—it is a little difficult to attempt a definition. It is a quality which admits humor as well as wit, love as well as knowledge, dreams as well as days. It may appear basely chauvinistic to add that it is the Christian synonym for sophistication but that (I do really think), is accurate. Last season we had a chance to watch this sophistication taking the stage in M. Giraudoux's "Madwoman", and now, in a period story set somewhere in the 90's (I guess), it is at work again. The story tells of a young girl's journey from innocence to beginning wisdom and there is little to remark about it except that it concerns one ghost, a number of children, several men and women, and a large number of bureaucrats; and it has a happy ending. As a theatre piece however, there is more to it than this. To my mind there is no question that the

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author was one of the finest lyric dramatists of his age and ours. Here, when one watches his handling of music interludes and introductions (lovely stuff by Francis Poulenc); of small choruses of children; of larger choruses of everyone; and particularly of a duo of Executioners—and all this of course in counterpoint and/or support of his dialogue—one wishes some dramatic institution would set up a course solely devoted to a study of his methods, as well as his philosophy. If he seems a little too spiritually sensible to appeal to our teeming multitudes, at least they should somehow get the benefit of his art.

In the present production by David Lowe and Richard Davidson, I think the most delighting contribution (aside from the irresistible Poulenc score), will be George S. Kaufman's direction which appeared to me to be absolutely faithful to the author's intentions. I am also crediting Mr. Kaufman with the strict casting—where on earth or Broadway he managed to discover the seven little girls is beyond me—and with a firm hand on every facet of the piece. It's a very good job and I'm awfully glad to be able to be contemporary rather than nostalgic about Mr. Kaufman in this column, at long last. Leueen MacGrath, Russell Collins, Wesley Addy, Frances Williams and particularly Malcolm Keen, all appeared to be having a fine time on the far side of the foots, and they certainly gave me one. (*at the Lyceum*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

The Screen

And See the World

LET'S continue the cinematic tour started a few weeks ago, a tour that takes us to distant lands without our going any farther than a movie theater. Sometimes of course these screen travels don't net us very much and we'd do better to stay at home, but then again we may hit on a really good film (like the current "The Third Man" with its flavor of Vienna today) that is even better than reading about the place.

Such a picture is *"The Titan—Story of Michelangelo"* which guides us through Renaissance Italy showing the life, times and the works of the great artist. Misanthropes may love this movie because there's not a living actor or person in the whole thing; but the film moves and is as exciting as any picture biography or thriller in which heroes and villains tangle over life's problems. The well-poised camera wanders from Florence to Rome and to places in between; and it sees buildings, churches, dwellings, statues, pictures, trees, skies and fields while the sound track narrates the facts of Michelangelo's life and times. Occasionally this narration, which is extremely well read by Frederic March, gets a bit florid and melo-

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dramatic in its interpretation, but on the whole it and the music with it are a good accompaniment to the beautiful images that cover the screen. If you have not seen any of the other films covering the work of men of art you will be surprised at how well the cinematic medium can add movement to pictures, statues and buildings. The camera lingers over the artists's Bacchus, the Pieta, David, the Medici tomb, the murals in the Sistine Chapel. These works of art come to life and their creator becomes a living man who hoped to escape death with artistic works that would last forever. His success is our gain.

It is difficult to give proper credit for this extraordinary film because it was originally made by Curt Oertel and has now been redesigned by Robert Flaherty; but in any case all those who had anything to do with its making deserve a vote of thanks. Biographers and historians may find that the picture oversimplifies Michelangelo's story and the Renaissance Period, but they as well as art-lovers and general movie-goers will applaud the extraordinarily beautiful visuals.

The screen traveler can also plan a trip to Denmark, but I advise him to feel pretty strong because when he sees *"Child of Man,"* he's likely to find the Danes quite depressing. Based on Martin Anderson Nexo's novel, "Ditte, Child of Man" this picture tells a grim tale about the illegitimate daughter of a mother who is sent to prison for murder. The girl gets along with her stepfather well and helps to bring up her step-brothers and sisters. Later she takes a job as a servant on a farm, and as the film ends she comes home, pregnant, to complete the cycle that started at the film's beginning. Actually the finale isn't as depressing as it sounds, because we know that Ditte will give her child the love that she never got (but needed so desperately) from her own mother. The Danish cast in this well-directed picture give fine performances; the photography is excellent; and admirers of Thomas Hardy's stories will enjoy every minute of the glum events. In spite of the plot's adversities, it somehow still believes in the dignity of man; but it refuses to allow man much sweetness or light to guide him through this dark world and wide.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Russian Literature

Helene Iswolsky

The Epic of Russian Literature. From its origins through Tolstoy. Marc Slonim. Oxford University Press. $5.00.

THIS is the first volume of Marc Slonim's work, soon to be followed by a second one presenting Russian literature from Tolstoy on through the Soviet writers. As the book's sub-title indicates, this first volume covers a long stretch of time. Such a book, with elaborate documentation, biographical material, literary and historical comment, fulfils a need strongly felt among students in the field of Russian culture. True, this field has already received considerable coverage; but the previously published handbooks and monographs on Russian authors and poets, and the various anthologies of Russian prose and poetry, are almost exclusively concerned with the purely literary and esthetic aspect and with the personal lives of the various writers.

Mr. Slonim has now added a more complex and extensive panorama of Russian culture. He approaches his subject not only as a literary critic, giving a great deal of attention to the *intrinsic* value of Russian belles lettres; he also writes as a historian and a sociologist, showing us how the development of Russian letters is intimately linked with certain trends of ideas: ethical, social and political. Mr. Slonim writes: "For centuries the search for truth, the ideological controversies, the political longings of the Russian people found expression in their literature. It would be futile to separate Russian writers from the spirit of their times and the various trends of national thought." Mr. Slonim has done much to clarify this point. He has contributed to the reader's knowledge and understanding of many a Russian literary masterpiece. He has also brought forward the works of minor Russian novelists, poets and political writers, unfamiliar to the student in the West, but well known in Russia as representative of their time.

From the early days of Russian history, we find "national thought" reflected in folk-lore and epic songs and ballads; in ancient chronicles written by monks; in instruction and rules set by princes. A strong *didactic* spirit is manifest in early poetic, literary and epistolary works, as Slonim very rightly points out; it is the awakening of a social and ethical consciousness, the search for a truly Christian way of life, both in the private and public field. The duties of a Christian ruler are mentioned more often than his privileges. As to the people, both Tolstoy and Dostoevski have often stressed the profoundly Christian sources of the Russian peasants' inspiration; for many centuries, the lives of the saints,

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authentic or apocryphal, together with translations from the Greek Fathers' homilies, were the only books read in the countryside. Slonim shows that this religious and didactic spirit was retained in modern Russian literature, though undergoing a series of transformations which make it almost unrecognizable and often paradoxical.

★

ANOTHER fundamental trait of that early period was the constant concern with the safety and stability of the State; it was to be built up and kept in unity, in spite of inner dissensions and the menace from without. This tendency is vividly expressed in the XIIIth century *Lay of the Host of Igor,* an epic describing Prince Igor's campaign against the Polovtzy tribe. "The artistic value of the *Lay,*" writes Slonim, "its sensitiveness to nature, to human emotions, and to historic events, its deep national awareness, its appeal for unity in the face of common danger, as well as its harmonious form and the cumulative effect of its rhythmic lines, place it above any literary work of that period and among the greatest Russian poems."

In the later XVIth and XVIIth centuries, national thought gradually lost its quality; its dynamism was checked, it was frozen and petrified by Muscovite theocracy. The preservation of the State was no longer a duty, but a religion, and the Church became the bearer of this State religion. John the Terrible stated in a famous epistle the subjects' obligation to die joyously not only for his master, but at his master's hands. This period of organized tyranny gave birth also to Russia's first rebel—famous for his writings: Prince Kurbsky, a soldier, who turned against John the Terrible and fled to Poland. Prince Kurbsky's letters to the Czar are classic pieces of Russian literature. Another rebel appeared a century later in the person of Archpriest Avvakum, the "old believer," who rose against the Patriarch and ended his life at the stake. Avvakum's autobiography is another classic of early Russian writings, and the author is usually considered as a distant forerunner of the Russian revolutionary.

These ancient landmarks of Russian literature are but the prelude to the main body of Slonim's book. Neither does the XVIIIth century, the age of "Russian enlightenment," hold a great number of pages. But the author gives in them a striking picture of the tremendous change wrought in Russian culture by the reforms of Peter the Great: Westernization, rationalization, secularization. "Instead of spreading pious ideas of the true faith and Christian virtue, Russian writers were propagating secular enlightenment, Voltairian scepticism, and the philosophy of the age of reason," writes Slonim. And yet, this "enlightened literature" as the author tells us, still served the same *didactic* purpose. It still had the building of Russia in mind. And it prepared the way for two great promoters of Russian culture: Lomonosov, grammarian, poet and physicist, who was the son of a poor White Sea fisherman; and Derzhavin, author of well-known odes that presented to modern Russian poetry its first patterns. In spite of his position of court-

NEWS FROM S&W

Lucile Hasley is getting writer's cramp and her mailman is becoming embittered—wishes he had taken up some nice light job like coal-heaving. It isn't only the fanmail, but dozens of copies of her book arriving to be autographed and sent off again. The book, as you know, is **REPROACHFULLY YOURS** ($2.25) and its sales have been at the top of the list ever since **Thomas Merton** and the Abbey of Gethsemani took it to their hearts and said so.

The Magnificat said the last word on **Mrs. Hasley:** "We all like her—and some of us must tell her so once in a while. We can imagine editors relaxing from the strain of their daily grind when they find something of hers in the mail." Yes indeed. You ought to see Sheed & Ward relax when it gets one of her letters: there isn't a dry eye in the place. . . . Perhaps it will be possible to publish her letters fifty years after her death (like St. Therese's). In the meantime, the book is quite funny enough to be going on with.

Talking of St. Therese, we are about to bring out a biography of her, **STORM OF GLORY** by **John Beevers** ($3, Feb. 21st), which is going to raise a few eyebrows. We don't, of course, mean that it is scandalous, but it is awfully surprising, because of the amount of new material he has used. Those who don't take sugar in their biographies and also prefer their saints unsweetened will be very pleased. So, we fancy, will St. Therese.

We've mentioned the Holy Year edition, revised and enlarged, of **John Farrow's PAGEANT OF THE POPES** ($4.50) before: it's also coming on February 21st, and shouldn't be missed. We don't know of any other book that gives you a picture of the whole Papacy from St. Peter to Pius XII in one highly readable volume, do you? Of course, if you don't want to know about the Popes. . . . But they seem to us a fitting subject for study in 1950, and would, even if it weren't a Holy Year.

Don't forget to read **Jean Danielou's SALVATION OF THE NATIONS** ($2)—we told you why two weeks ago and now remind you that the Pope and the author both think the reunion of the Churches is something we should all be worried about and working for, seeing it as a problem to be tackled, not an impractical dream . . . which way do you see it?

All these books except **REPROACHFULLY YOURS,** which is already published, will appear on February 21st—no reason you can't order them now. Remember, if you do order books from us, or write for the **TRUMPET,** address your letter to **Lucy MacGill** to make sure of prompt attention.

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poet and secretary to Empress Catherine the Great, Derzhavin dared to write the poem: "To Potentates and Judges," a direct condemnation of the excesses of autocracy. "Derzhavin," writes Slonim, "is one of the great pioneers of Russian civic poetry, which grew into a large movement in the nineteenth and twentieth century."

★

IT IS IN the light of these *civic* trends that Slonim examines the further development of Russian literature. And this is no artificial pattern. Poets versus potentates, Czars versus rebels, are everywhere reflected in Russian letters. Sometimes the Czars themselves turned into rebels for a time. Catherine the Great wrote biting satires. Her "Instructions" to the Russian legislative body, translated in foreign languages, were banned in reactionary France. Catherine's correspondence with Voltaire is well known, but we should also recall Beccaria's influence on the "Instructions," in which she made a plea against capital punishment.

Humanitarian and social trends were already strongly felt in Russia, through the influence of Novikov and Radistchev, the two first Russian political writers. Both vehemently denounced the scourge of their country's economic system: serfdom. Both suffered at the hands of Catherine, who by that time, scared by the French Revolution, had given up her radicalism. Both these men, beside their rôle as writers, were remarkable for their contributions to Russian thought and culture. Novikov was editor of several journals, ran a printing press and publishing houses on a non-profit basis, and made a collection of Russian folk-songs, one of the first of its kind. Radistchev, whose career was briefer and less varied, was the first example of that typically Russian phenomenon, "the repentant nobleman." He wrote of serfdom: "this monster of a hundred snouts," words which seem to have already the lashing quality of Gogol's satire. And another line by Radistchev encloses the seed of Dostoevski's universal pity: "My heart is lacerated by the sufferings of mankind."

Such are the sources of modern Russian literature and of its *civic* strain. From Radistchev to the rebel poet Ryleyev, who died on the scaffold. From Ryleyev to Pushkin, who is not only the great national poet but the poet of freedom *par excellence* (a fact, astonishingly enough, stressed by Soviet writer and laureate Constantine Simonov in a recent official speech!). From Pushkin to the writers of the forties and the sixties. The first great Russian literary critic, Bielinsky, was also the first Russian socialist. Nekrasov was the poet of the oppressed peasant, and Tyutchev wrote immortal verses on the poor Russian village visited by Christ "in the slave's garb." The "repentant noblemen" could not sleep because of the "potentates' sins." Tchaadayev and Soloviev turned to the Roman Catholic tradition in order to escape Russia's doomed theocracy. Dostoevski and the Slavophils turned to the pure tradition of Russian Orthodoxy. Tolstoy preached non-resistance and the simple life. The believers and the godless, the poets and the novelists, the revolutionaries and the conservatives, were all, in one way or another, seeking justice. Marc Slonim's book powerfully brings to the reader's attention the fact that pre-Soviet Russian literature was the vehicle of Russian freedom and of Russian humanism, the expression of Russian repentance, the longing for the saint, who in Dostoevski's own words, is the Russian people's one and only hero.

Books

The Vintage. Anthony West. Houghton Mifflin. $3.00.

MOST FICTIONAL heroes in the past have had a relatively easy time. However overwhelming were the odds against them, they at least knew their antagonist and battled it. Whether it was nature or prejudice, irrationality or monopoly capitalism, their own weakness or a stifling environment, the conflict was defined and readily understood. But in much recent fiction, the hero no longer has such objective standards to guide him. In a period when values are all askew, and good and evil often appear hopelessly intermingled, he has to redefine the entire conflict for himself. No bold or dedicated champion, he is frequently weak and confused, a little man struggling toward a dim horizon.

So it is with Anthony West's hero in *The Vintage,* John Wallis. A moderately successful English lawyer, whose personal life has become bitter and meaningless, he is a member of the British War Crimes Commission in Germany. After helping to prepare the case that convicts and hangs German General von Kenelm, he returns to his office overlooking the Berlin Palace of Justice and blows out his brains. When *The Vintage* opens, Wallis' body is on a slab in the morgue.

But death is not the end of struggle. Wallis is immediately dispatched to hell, a hell of his own making. It is an amazingly world-like place, entered through gates emblazoned with the sign, "Welcome to Paradise." As he travels through it and meets the people whom he had known in life, he is tormented by all the fears and errors of his life. The authorities preach adjustment: they offer him forgetfulness and perpetual pleasure. But some instinct in him cries out against this easy and animal-like refuge. Man must live and die for something more significant than this. With Kenelm as his inescapable companion, he continues his groping search for meaning.

His ultimate salvation, after a highly imaginative journey, is the realization that each of us must accept complete responsibility for every action. We must understand our guilt, and suffer its consequences in our own private hells. Only then will we become aware of the meaning of life, and "pass out of the nothingness of human fear, out of the sickness of our time, into eternal awareness of the mind of God."

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IT IS A deftly told and provocative story. Its after-death locale is an effective device, enabling the author to penetrate the essence of his characters' personalities without the heavy grinding of psychiatric machinery, and to project the jumbled anxiety and guilt of modern man without any literal limitations of time or space. But it is essentially a book of life, one man's thoughtful reflections on the question—what is it all for?

But ragged edges remain. Why should Nurnberg and the German general who ordered the mass murder of thousands of civilians and prisoners of war be part of the pattern? Kenelm, it is true, is not a Nazi. He realized the perniciousness of the Party for which he worked. Nevertheless, for the sake of glory and ambition, he openly and wittingly chose the side of evil. Yet Nurnberg is the immediate cause of Wallis' suicide. In Kenelm's hanging he evidently sees a bitter travesty of justice and the collapse of the fine ideals for which the war was fought. Each of us has his Ravensbrucks of guilt, he meditates; what right have we to murder this man for his frailties?

This equating of Kenelm's premeditated crimes with Wallis' well-meaning if perverted personal judgments is hardly palatable. Nurnberg becomes merely a catchword for universal human guilt. It is, I believe, an unfortunate peg on which to hang an otherwise sensitive and interesting first novel.

CAROL H. WEISS.

The Life and Times of Coventry Patmore. Derek Patmore. Oxford University Press. $4.50.

EDMUND GOSSE and Basil Champneys wrote biographies of Patmore, and there is a first-rate essay by Shane Leslie. That room to spare could be found for another book has been obvious ever since serious research on the lives of the great Victorians began. Derek Patmore has not said the final word, but he has come up with a great deal of hitherto unavailable material, some of it piquant and unconventional. Here is a poet who, convert and mystic though he was, dearly loved women. He married three of them, and he appears to have entertained a deep affection for still another. His road to Rome was a rather special thoroughfare, and he could be upon occasion mildly anticlerical. But nobody has written more delicate and revealing poems about domestic life than "The Departure" and "The Toys," even as no Englishman has done a better book of mystical maxims than *The Rod, the Root, and the Flower.*

The principal novel items in Derek Patmore's bill of fare are the story of his great-grandfather's affection for Alice Meynell, and his account of the circumstances concerning the destruction of the manuscript of "Sponsa Dei" after Father Hopkins had commented upon it. One surmises that Patmore was sorely tempted by his love for Mrs. Meynell, and also led to destroy the most ardent of his mystical speculations because it shocked

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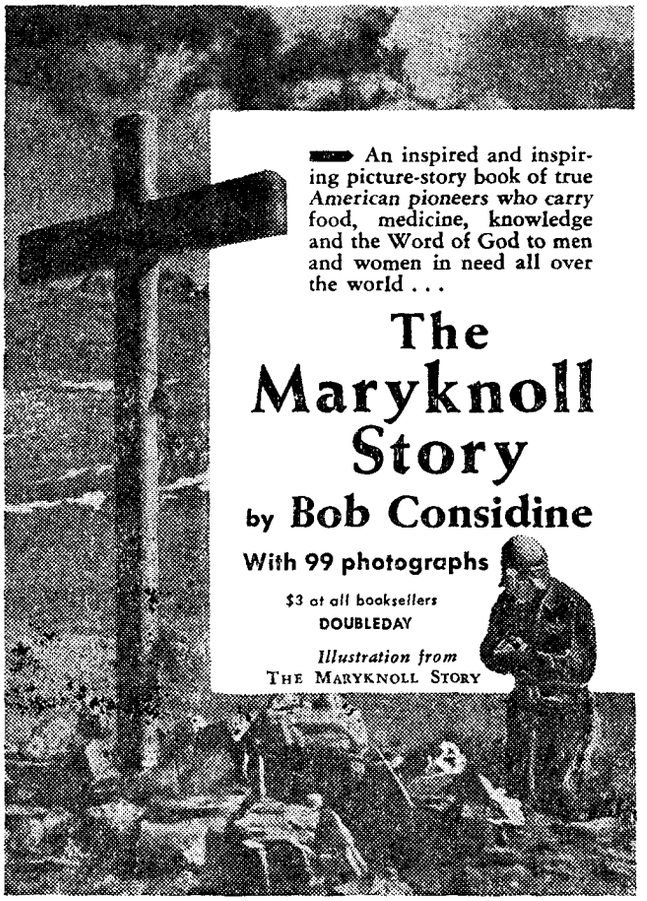
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his Jesuit friend. These are matters of genuine interest and they prove that while the Catholic revival was very holy, it was also very human. We may conclude that Alice Meynell was a sensible woman, and that in so far as Father Hopkins is concerned Patmore knew a saint when he saw one. I am sorry, as all of us are, that the manuscript of "Sponsa Dei" was burnt at the stake. That may, however, have been a salutary act of penitence.

What doesn't get into the book is Patmore's marvelous classical sense of humor, which associates him with Dryden and Pope. When some of his books and manuscripts were sold at auction, the catalog reported an item which has persistently intrigued me. Leigh Hunt had written a couplet:

> The two divinest things this earth has got
> A lovely woman in a rural spot.

To which Patmore's comment was immediate and pertinent:

> The two nicest things a man can grab:
> A handsome woman in a hansom cab.

As always, the great-grandson proves that the story of Sister Mary Christina (Patmore's daughter Emily) provided the deep spiritual sadness which was the only true foil for this poet's wit. She died early, and grace was at her bedside. Like her mother, she was religious, but it was as if her faith made all her father's poems come true. He went away from the graves of both mother and daughter, weeping bitterly. It was a great deal like Peter, after the cock had crowed. That is why I think that all writers who use English will keep a place in their hearts for Patmore.

The longer I reflect upon the matter, the less ardent is my regard for *The Unknown Eros*. The whole consignment of these poems is not worth one of Gerard Hopkins's. But the extraordinary Jesuit could not even have imagined the best passages of *The Angel in the House* or many other masterpieces. Marriage is a great sacrament. Despite all his foibles, his temptations, and his crochets, Patmore will help us to remember that.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

The Last Optimist. J. Alvarez del Vayo. Viking. $4.00.

THESE journalistic-political reminiscences, strung out over thirty-five years, are even flatter than most. There are many ventures in several lands but few adventures that come to life. The fragmentary things the author has to say about his native Spain manifest the righteous indignation that was so characteristic of the bitter debate over the Spanish Civil War. They are entirely one-sided but there is a lot in what he says—which is more than can be said for his more general remarks about present-day Europe, which the *Nation* has featured for so painfully long.

He repeats and emphasizes the old canard about

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Roosevelt's death: "Had he lived, American-Soviet relations, in the opinion of most informed Russians, would have followed a different course." Del Vayo expresses puzzlement at what happened to Czechoslovakia, since the Czech Communist leaders that he knew were such good "democrats." Finally, his basic starting point for interpreting developments in Europe is the meaningless slogan that "Russia wants peace." E.S.S.

A Long Day's Dying. Frederick Buechner. Knopf. $3.00.

THERE are five people living in and around New York City: Tristram Bone, a fat man; George Motley, a rather small novelist; Elizabeth Poor, a fairly young widow; Leander, her college freshman son; and a young college instructor, Paul Steitler. This novel is concerned with the intricacy, weight and effects of their relationships. Thus it is consciously a moral study of the results of a false accusation of homo-sexuality made against Steitler by Elizabeth to cover her own seduction.

A German woman who is Bone's servant, Elizabeth's fragile mother, and a monkey pet are secondary characters used to deepen the relief of Buechner's slowly developed, somewhat over-developed novel.

What is remarkable about Mr. Buechner's writing in this first novel, is its detachment and reserve. It gives a temporary impression of bloodlessness, but before the end of the book is reached, the deep concern the author has for his characters, and the capacity they have to destroy one another, is clear. Part of the impression is a result of Buechner's prose, which is consciously framed and sometimes successful to the point where nothing more could be said. Sometimes the powder is wet, and his elaborate care in arranging the failure is embarrassing.

The structure of the novel also has a number of periods of carefully-wrought pointlessness, and episodes that are empty. But when the author holds himself in and is firmly sure that he knows what he is doing, then he is capable of extraordinary writing. He is able to make ordinary, not quite innocent, but ordinary episodes alive with unstated horror or sexuality. He is often a wonderful satirist.

He is particularly capable when he is writing of the reactions and reflections of his individual characters. However it is here that Mr. Buechner's inadequacy is apparent. While he is disturbed about the moral quality of his characters' actions, he is unable to come to a clearly grasped resolution because his judgment is an entirely interior one, and is badly involved with emotional responses and sentiment. Tristram Bone, the man most clearly a *responsible* man in this story, says "With everyone always thinking, thinking, and saying little, there is so much blaming and misunderstanding and so little kindness. Oh let us be kind!" And kindness is kindness, yes, but it is also something that Elizabeth's grandmother is, that Leander is, but Elizabeth is not, and is involved with delicacy of feeling and withdrawal and sweet sad-

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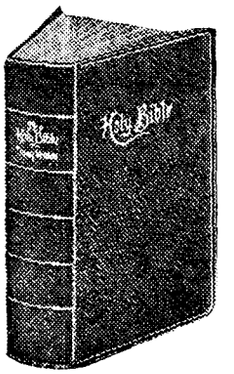

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ness about Existence. It makes an adolescent philosophy. The excellent literary talent of Mr. Buechner is enervated by the unavoidably unimportant things that he says, and the novel can be no more than a sentimental gesture to the passage from Milton that is its theme:

But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of love how we may lighten
Each other's burden in our share of woe;
Since this day's death denounc'd, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-pac'd evil,
A long day's dying to augment our pain,
And to our seed, (O Hapless seed!), deriv'd.

WILLIAM PFAFF.

History of U. S. Naval Operations in World War II. Volume IV: Coral Sea, Midway and Submarine Actions. Volume V: The Struggle for Guadalcanal. Samuel Eliot Morison. Little Brown. $6.00 each.

THESE are the latest volumes in a series of fourteen planned to tell the epic story of our fighting Navy in the recent war. An inherently thrilling story, in less competent hands it could have been greatly oversimplified and romanticized on one hand, or smothered in a mass of technical detail on the other. Morison, an eminent historian and enthusiastic lifetime sailor, has avoided both these mistakes by writing an accurate and exciting narrative that will undoubtedly rank among the best histories of particular aspects of the war. He has had access to both American and Japanese records, plus his own on-the-spot research as a Navy historical officer; he reveals a lot of new information.

Because the history is an unofficial one, written by a distinguished civilian scholar, it is disappointing to find in it traces of the professional military mentality. This is particularly true in Volume V, where the costly errors of commanders, while bluntly admitted, are discussed from a cold, detached, point of view, rather than in terms of the hundreds of men who died because of them.

PAUL FARRELL.

• REVIEWERS •

Carol H. WEISS is a New Yorker who recently completed graduate studies in Political Science at Columbia University.

George N. SHUSTER was at one time managing editor of THE COMMONWEAL. He is now president of Hunter College in New York City. He is the author of *The Catholic Spirit in Modern English Literature, Germany: A Short History* and numerous other literary and political volumes.

Paul FARRELL, who served as an Army officer in the European theater, is now an editor for the Conover-Mast publishing company.

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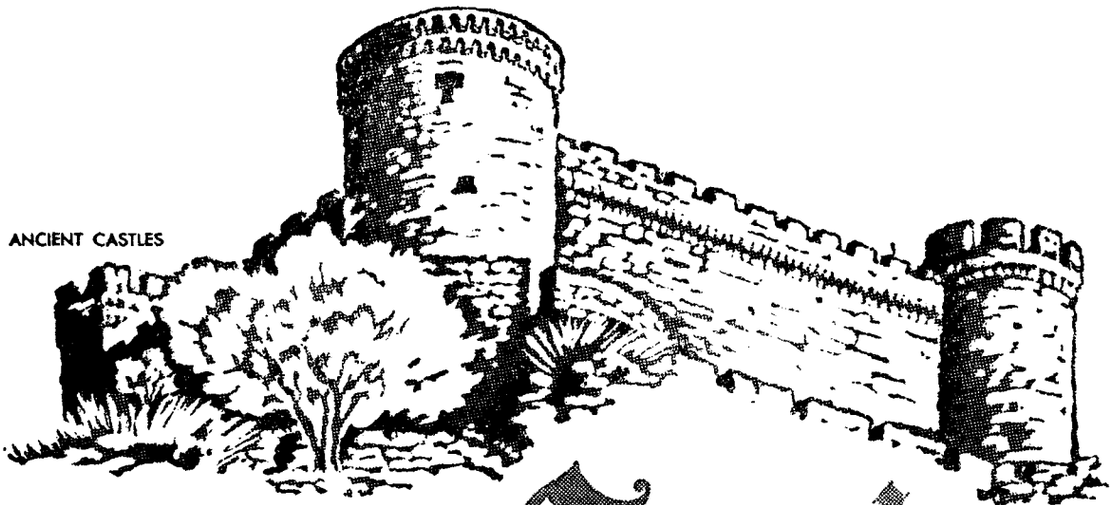

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